

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 NOUAKC 00128 140720Z

ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00
DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 /031 W
-----014459 140725Z /13

R 131600Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8447

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NOUAKCHOTT 0128

ABIDJAN FOR FAA REP

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, MR, AFSP

SUBJECT: US OFFICIAL TRAVEL ON AIR MAURITANIA

REF: (A) 76 STATE 184156, (B) 76 NOUAKCHOTT 1047, (C)
76 NOUAKCHOTT 1643, (D) 76 STATE 192161, (E) 76 NOUAKCHOTT 1781,
(F) 76 STATE 165570

1. SUMMARY: HUGHES AIRWEST CORP., WHICH HOLDS MAINTENANCE
CONTRACT FOR AIR MAURITANIA (AIRM) HAS REQUESTED EMBASSY RE-
CONSIDER 1976 DECISION TO PROHIBIT US OFFICIAL TRAVEL ON
AIRLINE (REF A). HUGHES CONTENDS UNSAFE PRACTICES AND CONDI-
TIONS WHICH LED TO DECISION NO LONGER EXIST. END SUMMARY

2. BACKGROUND: IN APRIL 1976, HUGHES BECAME CONCERNED ENOUGH
ABOUT UNSAFE CONDITIONS IN AIR MAURITANIA TO INFORM THE GIRM
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND TRANSPORTATION THAT IT WOULD NOT BE
HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCIDENTS RESULTING FROM ELEMENTS OVER
WHICH HUGHES HAS NO CONTROL (REF B). FURTHER DETERIORATIONS
REPORTED IN JULY 1976 (REFS C & D) INCLUDING CRASH OF LEASED
DC-3 IN TIDJIKDJA ON JULY 23, LED TO DEPARTMENT NOTICE TO ALL
POSTS THAT ALL OFFICIAL TRAVELLERS SHOULD AVOID AIRM UNTIL
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 NOUAKC 00128 140720Z

FURTHER NOTICE. THE GIRM WAS NOTIFIED OF THE ACTION IN A LETTER
WHICH AT SAME TIME ASSURED GIRM THAT USG STOOD READY TO ASSIST
IN CORRECTING PROBLEM AND RESTORATION ACCEPTABLE SAFETY RATING
(REF E).

3. IMPROVEMENTS IN AIRM OPERATIONS WERE NOTED SOON THEREAFTER
(AUGUST 1976). SUBSEQUENT DECISIONS TO TAKE THE DC-3S AND

(QUITE RECENTLY) DC-4S OUT OF OPERATION, AS OF MARCH 1, 1978
WILL REDUCE AIRM FLEET TO TWO FAIRCHILD F-27AS AND ONE PIPER
NAVAJO AIRCRAFT ALL OF WHICH MAINTAINED BY HUGHES WHO CLAIM
TO BE ABLE TO GUARANTEE AIRWORTHINESS. SINCE NOVEMBER 1976
DC-3S AND DC-4S HAVE NOT RPT NOT BEEN MAINTAINED BY HUGHES.

4. FYI: HUGHES CURRENTLY HAS NO CONTROL OVER ASPECTS AIRM
OPERATION OVQER THAN MAINTENANCE. HOWEVER, ON JANUARY 9, 1978
COMPANY REP FROM HEADQUARTERS QUIETLY SUBMITTED PROPOSAL
TO MINISTER OF COMMERCE,
NSPORTS & TOURISM, BUT NOT TO
AIRM, THAT HUGHES UNDERTAKE COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVE-
NESS STUDY AT COST. HUGHES CLAIMS IF PROPOSAL ACCEPTED, THEY
WILL THEN BE IN POSITION ACCURATELY ASSESS ALL ASPECTS WITH A
VIEW TO EXPANDING AIRM OPERATION INCLUDING ADDITION OF JET
CAPABILITY.
END FYI

5. HUGHES TOOK OCCASION OF NEW AMBASSADOR'S ARRIVAL TO RAISE
QUESTION OF LIFTING THE BAN ON OFFICIAL AMERICAN USE. THE
AMBASSADOR ADMITTED TO SOME DISCOMFORT WITH A SITUATION
WHEREIN AMERICAN OFFICIALS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO FLY IN AIR-
CRAFT MAINTAINED BY AN AMERICAN FIRM. HE HASTENED TO ADD,
HOWEVER, THAT HE OBVIOUSLY COULD NOT REVERSE HIS PREDECESSOR'S
DECISON UNLESS HE HAD EVIDENCE THAT AIRM HAS A CLEAN BILL OF
HEALTH FROM A RECOGNIZED REGULATORY ORGANIZATION, PREFERABLY
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 NOUAKC 00128 140720Z

FAA. HUGHES COUNTERED WITH STATEMENT THAT AIRM HAS BEEN CER-
TIFIED BY THE FRENCH REGULATORY BODY VERITAS, WHOSE STAN-
DARDS THEY CLAIMED ARE MORE STRINGENT THAT FAA'S. AMBASSADOR
ASKED HUGHES REP TO SUBMIT FORMAL REQUEST, WITH SUPPORTING
DOCUMENTATION, FOR RESCISSION OF BAN, AND PROMISED PROMPT
CONSIDERATION.

6. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY ADVICE THAT THE DEPARTMENT AND
FAA CAN PROVIDE. IN THIS REGARD, A VISIT FROM THE FAA REP IN
ABIDJAN WOULD BE HELPFUL. THE ANSWER TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS
WOULD ALSO BE OF BENEFIT TO US: (A) DOES FAA ACCEPT VERITAS
CERTIFICATION AND VICE VERSA? (B) DOES AIRM MEET THE SAFETY
STANDARDS OF ICAO AND THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
AIRLINE PILOTS?

KRYZA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONNEL MOVEMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NOUAKC00128
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780021-1053
Format: TEL
From: NOUAKCHOTT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780165/aaaacdbv.tel
Line Count: 109
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f723fce3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 184156, 76 NOUAKCHOTT 1047
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3777779
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: US OFFICIAL TRAVEL ON AIR MAURITANIA
TAGS: EAIR, AFSP, MR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f723fce3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014